
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2020

by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/20/3255984

Great North Road, Barnet, London EN5 1AU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by MBNL against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 20/1265/FUL, dated 4 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 1 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a 20m monopole supporting 12 no. antenna apertures, equipment cabinets and ancillary equipment, the removal of the existing 14.7m monopole, supporting 3 no. antennas, redundant equipment cabinets and development ancillary thereto.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is an area of pavement to the eastern side of the A1000, opposite an existing telecommunications pole. Whilst there are some commercial uses on the western side of the road, the area is predominantly residential in character. Mostly two storey dwellings line either side of side roads that link with the A1000. There are a number of taller flatted developments further south between The Fairway and Lyonsdown Road. There are vertical features to the street scene. The existing pole is marginally below 15 metres and the streetlamp stands are around 10 metres. Immediately to the east of the appeal site is Greenhill Gardens, an urban green space that has a number of mature trees close to the road facing boundary.
4. The proposed pole would be substantial in height. At 20 metres, and taking into account the removal of the existing pole, it would be twice the height of the lampstands that line the road and thus noticeably out of scale with any other slim profile local feature. It would become a focal point in its own right and therefore something of an overly obvious industrial type structure in a predominantly residential area. Its visual influence would be very wide, particularly from higher ground levels to the north, an effect exacerbated by the wider sections at the top. The tree cover from Greenhill Gardens would

offer some screening and natural backdrop but their effect would be very localised and seasonal and their stature in any event would not sufficiently compete with the pole to acceptably reduce its visual impact.

5. The installation of the pole would also include a number of ancillary cabinets at street level. There would be six of these including the one at the base of the pole. There are cabinets associated with the existing pole on the opposite side of the road and these would be removed as part of the appeal scheme. There is therefore some form of offset to consider. That said, the proposed cabinets would be greater in number and larger in size, sat noticeably further forward on the pavement. They would accordingly add to a proliferation of apparatus and thus clutter in an otherwise open and unobstructed street scene.
6. Taking these matters together, the appeal scheme would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and thereby be contrary to Policies DM01 and DM18 of the Local Plan¹. Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that new development proposals should be based on an understanding of local characteristics and should preserve or enhance local character and respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets. In regard to telecommunications equipment specifically, they state that they will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is no significant adverse effect on the space in which they are located.

Other Matters

7. I see from the evidence that the appellant has explored other locations for the new pole, but I see the list as less than exhaustive. In any case, the dismissal of alternative locations does not mean the erection of the pole at the appeal site would be acceptable and not give rise to harm. I am also mindful that the establishment of a support network for the roll out of 5G is an important priority for improving telecommunications in the capital and indeed the UK. That said, I remain unconvinced, for the above reasons, that the appeal site is the right location for the pole proposed. I am not therefore lead to allowing the appeal for this reason.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons I have explained above, the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR

¹ Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) Development Plan Document 2012